standards, EIAs are also extending their technical expertise to manufacturers and exporters for enabling them to upgrade their quality in conformity with international standards It is not, therefore, a fact that the measures have led to laxity in quality of export products.

Discussions for trade with Russia

28. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether discussions have been held with the Russians in the first week of July, 1994 regarding trade with that country and if so, what are the details thereof; and

(b) what is the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) During Prime Minister's visit to Moscow from 29 June to 2 July, 1994, 11 documents were signed. These include two declarations on the protection of interests of pluarlistic states and on further development and intensification of bilateral cooperation. Apart from these, 9 other agrtements and protocols were signed on cooperation in tourism, environment, space, information technology, meteorology, science and technology standardisation, extension of the 1992 defence credit agreement and agreement on setting up of a joint venture in military aviation.

A number of important decisions on bilateral trade matters were also taken during the visit. The Russian side conveyed that they were taking a series of steps to facilitate export of goods from India on the debt repayment route. It was also decided that a three year perspective plan for the import of tea, tobacco, soyameal, leather and pharmaceuticals from India would be worked out to ensure greater predictability and continuity with regard to export of these items.

It was decided that the bilateral Joint Commission which would hold its first meeting in Moscow in September will be the forum for monitoring economic, trade and cultural exchanges. The working groups under the Joint Commission will have separate meetings before its plenary session in September.

Multinationals in tea market

29. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government popose to open domestic tea market to foreign multinationals;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this is likely to adversely affect the production of quality tea in the country; and

(c) if so, what steps are being contemplated to protect the interest of domestic tea industry in view of lag in exports and to maintain its good quality?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Multinational companies have long since been operating in the Indian tea market. These companies operate within the policy framework of the Government which is directed towards all round development of tea industry with particular emphasis on increasing production and maintaining the distinct quality of Indian tea.

(c) In order to boost exports of Indian tea, a number of steps are being taken by the Tea Board which include uninational campaign for Indian tea organising trade delegations/buyer-seller meets, various overseas promotional demonstrations & media publicity etc. Tea Board has always been emphasising on maintaining the quality of Indian tea and permits use of its logo only to pure Indian varieties.